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August 13, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to you concerning a recently released Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that found that the federal government has not succeeded in effectively combating intellectual property (IP) theft. The report specifically stated that the The National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (NIPRCC), which is comprised of five agencies charged with coordinating the enforcement of IP laws, has failed to effectively fulfill its mission.

Counterfeit goods cost U.S. companies approximately \$250 billion each year and have already robbed our economy of an estimated 750,000 jobs. In the midst of current economic conditions and the ongoing turmoil in the housing market, we cannot afford to overlook a problem that is getting worse. Our competitors are cheating, and we must better organize a comprehensive response and strengthen our enforcement of existing laws.

The GAO report makes a clear case for executive and legislative action to further strengthen the enforcement of our IP laws. Most notably, the report concluded that agencies in NIPRCC do not analyze the effectiveness of their own enforcement actions or report data on IP crimes so that the effectiveness of their actions can be judged by third parties.

The NIPRCC was established to coordinate with federal agencies on the collection and analysis of data received from the private sector relating to IP-related complaints. The GAO report points out that most agencies do not fully understand the mission of the NIPRCC and that few agency personnel are dedicated solely to IP enforcement.

We believe that we have a sound proposal that would help strengthen our IP laws. We introduced H.R. 3578, *The Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement Act*, which is designed to expand upon and improve existing IP enforcement efforts. Our legislation offers a focused, aggressive plan to combat counterfeit and pirated goods at home and

abroad. In addition, our bill seeks to rid the global supply chain of counterfeit goods by initiating an approach to international IP enforcement that would have the United States set standards and partner with like-minded countries. This approach is modeled after the government's successful efforts with other nations to police money-laundering and other black market crimes.

The speed with which we act is critical. Given that, we ask that your administration work expeditiously to replace the current loose interagency approach to tracking IP theft with our proposed Intellectual Property Enforcement Network (IPEN).

In addition, we ask that the NIPRCC agencies be made to establish quantifiable performance goals so that their enforcement efforts can be assessed. It must also be made to implement more stringent guidelines for data collection and establish a system for analyzing data.

It is time to show American entrepreneurs, manufacturers and consumers that the United States is not going to stand on the sidelines and watch as jobs are lost, public health and safety are threatened and consumer confidence declines.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on our legislation and your plan to strengthen IP enforcement.

Sincerely,


